

ROSICRUCIAN DIGEST

DECEMBER, 1950 - 30c per copy





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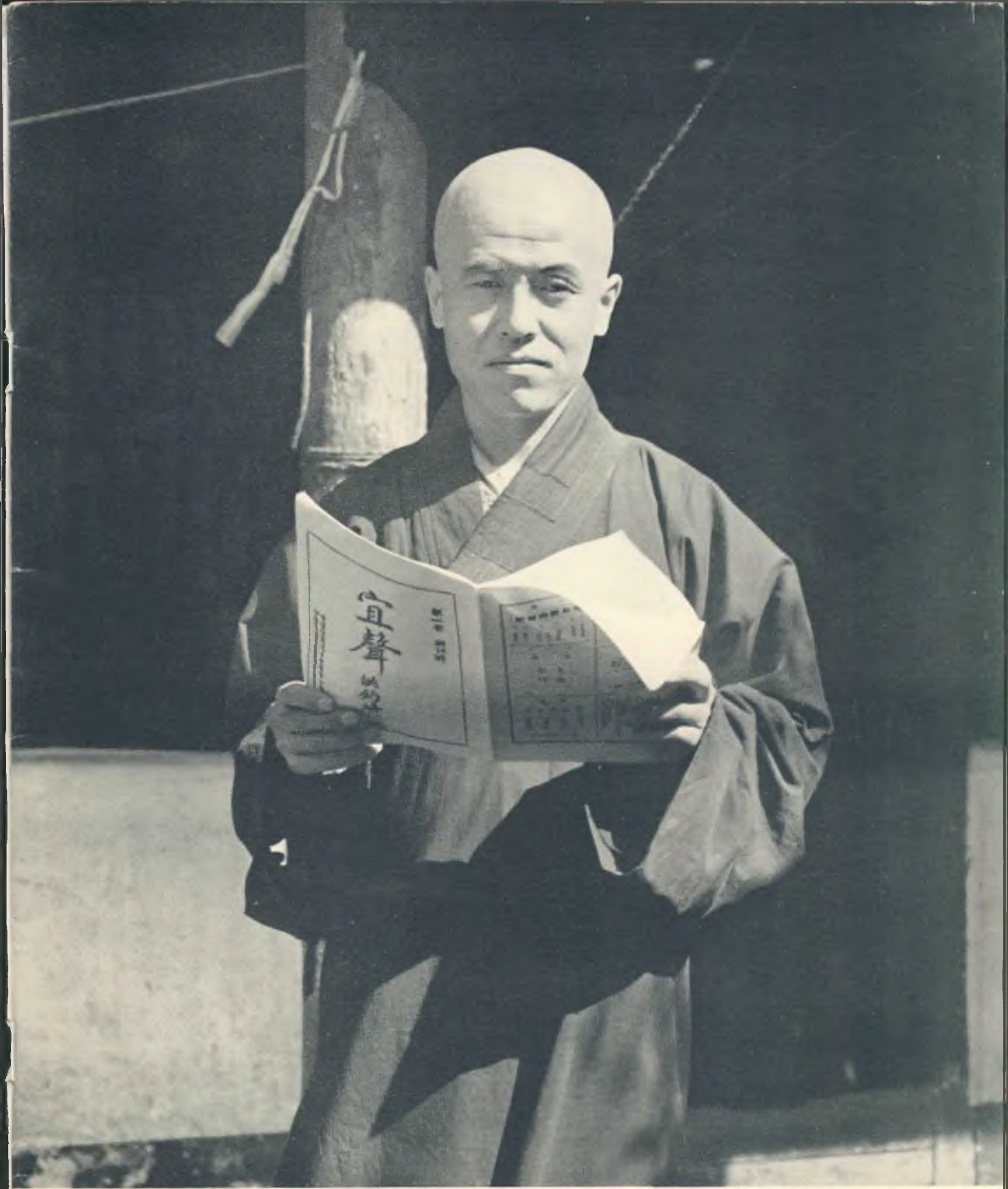
WE THINK in terms of pictures. Our ideas are not composed of mere angles, straight lines, or cubes, but are the complete mental forms of things we have heard, seen, tasted, felt, or smelled. A thing need not always be seen in its entirety to suggest its complete nature to us. One snowflake can convey the idea of a storm, a flag can signify the nature it represents, and the appearance of one uniformed police officer denotes the forces of law and order. One little sign or symbol, simple, even inconspicuous, can by association bring to the fore of human consciousness a vast and detailed mental picture of that which it represents. A handsome, yet small Seal often can arouse more curiosity by the imaginative picture it creates in the mind than a long letter or persuasive argument.

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BUDDHIST SAGE

Known as a bhikkhu or mendicant monk, this Chinese Buddhist pauses in his studies before his Shanghai vihara (monastery), to graciously pose for his photograph. His robe is a brilliant yellow, his feet are sandaled, and his head shaven according to tradition. His simplicity of manner, penetrating gaze, and soft-spoken words reflected the sincerity in his faith.

(Photo by AMORC Camera Expedition)



The Sacred Tradition

THE progress of mind, morality, and culture owes a debt to the *descent of tradition*. Written upon the scroll of tradition are the experiences of those who have tasted life . . . there in bold characters are revealed their trials, tribulations, mistakes, and lessons learned.

This scroll of tradition is youth's greatest heritage . . . upon it, with freshness and vigor, youth undertakes to impress deeds of his own. Each life is, in a sense, a blank tablet upon which the Self writes its own history for posterity.

The simple expression of the giving of what one has—or of himself—so as to bring happiness to another, is the *spirit of Christmas*. Such an age-old act has the place of honor on this scroll.

In accordance with this sacred tradition, we, the Staff and Officers of the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, extend to all our members and friends

A Merry Christmas



ROSICRUCIAN DIGEST

COVERS THE WORLD

THE OFFICIAL INTERNATIONAL ROSICRUCIAN MAGAZINE OF THE WORLD-WIDE ROSICRUCIAN ORDER

Vol. XXVIII

DECEMBER, 1950

No. 11

Buddhist Sage (Frontispiece)	401
Thought of the Month: Euthanasia	404
Is Peace Hopeless?	408
A Seed	410
Applied Christianity: Lesson One	411
Temple Echoes	415
Following the Path of Light	417
Sanctum Musings: The Christmas Star	420
As Science Sees It	421
Cathedral Contacts: The Greatest Gift	425
Gustav Meyrink—The Mystic of Lake Starnberg	427
Searching the Unknown	429
The Reader's Notebook	430
Ice Flowers	433
Refuge from the World (Illustration)	437

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SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

EDITOR: Frances Vejtasa

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THE THOUGHT OF THE MONTH EUTHANASIA

By THE IMPERATOR



PERIODICALLY, the problem of euthanasia or, as it is popularly termed, *mercy deaths*, rises to the fore of public attention. It is both a problem and a practice that dates far back into antiquity, for its basis is as old as society itself. The destruction of the lives of those who were incompetent, as the very aged, the feeble-minded, the weak and crippled, to early society seemed necessitated by two factors. The first of these was *economic*. Shortage of food supplies, as a result of drought or prolonged war, appeared to make compassion, for those unable to share in the labors of society, an expensive luxury. They would become extra mouths to feed and, in addition, they would require care by those who were needed to perform the labor of the community. Strabo, ancient historian, relates that the very old men of one of the Hellenic cities met together at a given time, garbed as if to banquet, and then in unison drank the hemlock (the famous narcotic poison). This was done when they realized they were incapable of doing anything useful for their fatherland.

The other factor which resulted in this compulsory death of the aged and infirm was what we might term *eugenics*. However, eugenics is a word of comparatively recent origin given to a "study of methods which improve or impair racial qualities." Among the early civilizations, notably that of Greece, the state was made the supreme ideal. The highest virtues could only be achieved by attaining good citi-

zenship. Serving the perfect state resulted in the *summum bonum* for the individual. Obviously, this was one of the incentives that, directly or indirectly, led to the great strides in culture during that era. Since the individual was made so conscious of his contribution to the state, that factor was made to adumbrate all other considerations. He must achieve a healthy mind and body at all sacrifice. One who was mentally deficient, aged or decrepit, became a *liability to the state*. Therefore, he must be removed for the benefit of the whole of society.

Even in that early period, before Aristotle's simple biological researches, there was an awareness that the breeding of the diseased and feeble-minded members of society produced an inferior race. With the overwhelming subordination of the individual to the collective welfare, the moral deterrent to taking the life of the "useless" individual was very slight. There was greater compunction against continuing a life that might deter the advancement of the state. There was not, as one might imagine today, a trenchant disregard for life or a gross lack of moral sense. In fact, such conduct only the more indicates that morality, as an innate impulse, is conditional by social forms and the ideals that follow from them. Religion and custom change from time to time the direction in which the individual moves to attain what is conceived as the highest good. Life was no cheaper to the Greeks than to our modern society. There was, however, a different conception than is perhaps generally held today, as to the duty and purpose of that life. Man owed

his life to the state, first, because it is only through the perfect state that his Divine immanent qualities could be expressed.

During the latter period of Athens, when colonization had become impracticable, statesmen and political thinkers desired to keep the population stationary. Fathers then had the discretionary right to *expose* their children at birth. Girls and weak boys frequently were the victims. They either died of such exposure or were adopted by others and enslaved. Potter says, in his notable work, *The Antiquities of Greece*, "daughters especially were thus treated (exposed), as requiring more charges to educate and settle them in the world than sons."

Newborn infants were often taken before the elders (officials) by the father for careful examination. If they were found unfit, as weak or abnormal, they were then ordered to be cast into a chasm near Mount Taygetus. Even Plato, in his *Republic*, advises, "the children of inferior parents and any maimed offspring of others, they (the guardians) will secretly put out of the way as is fitting."

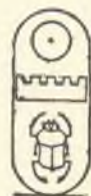
As indicative that such acts were not prompted by sadistic motives or barbarian brutality, a ceremony of dignity and religious rite usually accompanied them. The child which was to be exposed was usually washed with wine as part of a rite of lustration, then swathed in its best finery before being abandoned to its fate. The psychological significance must not be lost sight of in order to understand a behavior which seems abhorrent to us. The full life of the individual is not to be found in a mere personal survival. To the Greeks that meant nothing more than an animal existence. The united effort of the people created a condition which permitted the expansion of the individual self. In other words, the state, as a created entity, provided for the extension of the personal consciousness of the individual. One, therefore, must be willing to sacrifice his limited being, the individual self, if need be, that others might enjoy the fullness of life that is derived through the healthy state.

The aged and infirm themselves, if capable of understanding the situation,

usually concurred in this. They had, in their opinion, derived the enjoyment of life only through the *collective advantages* of the state, the result of sacrifices made by others. So, in turn, they must forfeit their individual lives to preserve the welfare of society. It was a compensation which they or the parents of the inferior infants were psychologically adjusted to make. One often endures pain in a treatment so that subsequently a remedy might be had. Thus, too, these aged and infirm of ancient Greece endured opposing the instinct of preserving individual existence so that the *greater self*, the state, might survive.

Modern eugenics, as a science, also realizes the dangers accruing from the marriage and reproduction of mental incompetents. In the breeding of animals we are afforded an excellent example of the improving of stock by natural selection of the more perfect specimens. The most perfect human types, intellectually and physically, if mated, would unquestionably raise the level of society, at least in a cultural sense. Eugenics, of course, does not advocate outright euthanasia for incurables or defectives. It does expound the need of segregation and sterilization to prevent impairing the race. Segregation becomes each year an increasing expense to society for the reason that prevention of the marriage and propagation of deficient is not under any universal control. As a result, public institutions for the unfortunates are on the increase.

Principally the current question of euthanasia, or mercy deaths, concerns the taking of the life of those who are suffering excruciating pain or who are but animated unintelligent entities, as idiots or imbeciles. In the matter of those who are incurable and who suffer severely, the problem is one of *expediency* against *morality*. The afflicted person, knowing that there is in his life no hope for relief from his torment, would in most instances, as actual cases have shown, prefer a painless death. It is solely and wholly unjust to call such a victim, who seeks that death, a coward. After all, he may have endured, with bravery, more suffering than most men would ever be called upon to experience, before he has come



to that decision. What is accomplished by the individual's continuation of a virtual living hell? The sufferer may have the same esteem for life as anyone else—providing that life can afford some degree of normal function. If all one's faculties are inhibited by intense pain or complete and permanent paralysis, of what value is that life either to the victim or to humanity?

A Moral Issue

Today's proscription of euthanasia is principally founded upon the moral issue. It completely disregards the consent of the sufferer, his willingness to abandon his own life, or the fact that he may be a liability to society. The moral principle arises from religious dogma. It is generally held that life, though a natural phenomenon manifesting according to natural laws, is of Divine decree. Further, man is endowed with soul or with a Divine quality so named. The position is taken that this soul or Divine quality is not his possession but is, in a sense, a *trust*. Man is imbued with this spiritual content so as to fulfill a purpose or mission which transcends his own desires.

Generally speaking, religion further contends that suffering during mortal existence is a consequence of one or two reasons:

- a. A violation of natural or Divine laws by which the individual must learn, through pain or misfortune, his dereliction.
- b. That human suffering is the direct imposition of the Divine will either as a penalty or for some reason that the mortal may never know.

Religion advocates relief from mortal turmoil in numerous ways, principally in the individual's seeking salvation, that is, in embracing Divine fiats as interpreted by his particular sect. Therefore, it proclaims that ultimate happiness and freedom from suffering can come to man only through union with the deity here or in a hereafter.

Under these circumstances and as a result of this line of reasoning, the moral precept is that man has not the right to destroy a Divine manifestation—to take life—or to interfere with the Divine intent, the purpose of the soul. Nevertheless, organized mankind or society, even civilized nations, are not

consistent with the avowed moral precepts. Nations will sacrifice the lives of millions of men in war, as individuals, to preserve principles which to them have a *greater value* than life itself. In the main, religion supports society in war where, for instance, the conflict has any religious grounds whatsoever.

Still another conspicuous example of society's condoning the taking of life, in opposition to the moral principle, is the enforcement of capital punishment by many nations. There is a psychological factor underlying these examples which accounts for them. Instinctively man places a tremendous value upon life, which has no religious or moral connotations. As a living organism, he has been constituted to fight to preserve life. On the other hand, as an intelligent being, as a human, he has developed intellectual desires or values which are often brought into conflict with those urges of self survival. As a consequence, man will often willingly sacrifice life for these intellectual values, such as freedom, justice, and the like. Moral and religious support has been given by custom to these intellectual values. As a result, in most societies, though there is a reluctance that life be sacrificed for such values, there is as yet no mass prohibition of war.

The Question of Motives

Where extreme individual suffering is concerned, for which there is no relief, opinion is still against the practice of euthanasia aside from the moral objection. The average individual has not been conditioned by custom or personal experience, as in war, to realize any necessity to take the life of the sufferer. In these instances, the average citizen holds the value of life itself as greater than the particular value it may have to the afflicted person. Obviously, such reasoning is not sound. Either there is no justification for the taking of human life by man or there are exceptions which have rectitude. If the latter is true, as in the case of war, capital punishment, and self-defense, then euthanasia or mercy deaths are likewise justifiable.

Certainly from the wholly expedient and logical point of view, it might be

argued that society, in bringing about the death of the defectives and those incurables suffering great pain, would be acting in defense of self. For after all, society has a *collective self*. It is its consciousness of the welfare of the people as a whole. Further, if the individual self is the integrated consciousness of one's whole being and his relation to other beings, then psychologically an idiot or one in continuous great pain has the self inhibited. Such an individual self, from the materialistic point of view, ceases to function under such circumstances. By euthanasia, then, the suffering ceases without an effect upon self. Further, the individual is no longer in conflict with or a liability to the social self, the collective consciousness of the state.

Those who would reason in this dispassionate vein, as do some scientists and others, likewise readily admit the dangers which might accrue from legalized euthanasia. Upon whom is to rest the authority of decision as to the taking of life on such a broad scale?

Criminals and other interests would, through political corruption, decimate thousands of persons annually under the pretext of justifiable homicide. Infanticide might reach great proportions on the wholly dubious grounds that the children were incurable defectives. Such legislature might encourage sadistic tendencies, even in the therapeutic sciences, where they are now often held in check only by society's evaluation of life.

What I am about to say, in conclusion, may be misconstrued. I am, however, of the opinion that, where an individual takes the life of another, motivated wholly by *love* and with the consent of the other to, for example, relieve him of excruciating and permanent pain, no moral stigma should be attached to his act, nor will Cosmic penalty be exacted of him. Such acts admittedly cannot be encouraged, for it would be difficult to determine the true motive behind each act and whether it was actually justified in the above sense.



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Is Peace Hopeless?

By DR. H. SPENCER LEWIS, F.R.C.
(From the *Rosicrucian Digest*, December, 1935)

Since thousands of readers of the *Rosicrucian Digest* have not read many of the earlier articles of our late Emperor, Dr. H. Spencer Lewis, we adopted the editorial policy of publishing each month one of his outstanding articles, so that his thoughts would continue to reside within the pages of this publication.



ACCORDING to religion's traditions, nineteen hundred and thirty-five years ago [1950]—more or less according to various calendars—the great Peacemaker was born. The most beautiful ideal He held before the world was that of universal peace.

On the 4th day of December [in 1915]—Henry Ford sailed from New York with a special chartered boat and a number of delegates and a great hope that they would be able to plead with European powers for peace. It was the world's most modern and most fanciful peace expedition, but it failed in its mission just as did Jesus the Christ in His desire to establish and maintain peace on earth.

We are prone to think that much of the cause of war, and certainly most of the horrifying and horrible possibilities of war, are a result of civilization. We often feel that with the development of nationalism, national interests, modern economic systems, the advancement of machinery and science, warfare has actually become a child of civilization and that, as our modern interests, ideas, and individualistic conceptions of life evolve and become more complex, war will become more and more certain.

But the truth of the matter is that when Jesus the Christ came to this sad old world as a Saviour of men and a messenger of peace, warfare was so rife and the world filled with such destruction of life that Jesus in His ministry felt it necessary to place great emphasis upon peace and upon the necessity of loving our neighbors as we love ourselves. If we study the preachments of Jesus and analyze them, we must come to the conclusion that Jesus was saddened by the lack of brotherliness, the hatred, enmity, jealousy, and other destructive emotions expressed by man toward mankind. If we study and trace the history of the world backward from the time of His birth, we find that from the dawn of creation man has battled in ignorance not only against the elements of nature and the good impulses within his own consciousness, but also he has battled against his brother, placing a low price upon life and giving little consideration to the human ties that should have bound all of mankind into one glorious nation.

That Jesus failed to bring about universal peace is only a further proof that the animalistic tendencies of uncultured and cultured human nature are still inclined toward war and warfare. We should not be surprised, therefore, that Henry Ford, with all of his ideals

and hopes, should have met with failure in his peace expedition on December 4, 1915.

Time for Meditation

This month throughout the Christian world the birth of Jesus the Christ, the great Peacemaker and Saviour of man, is celebrated on the 25th. It is a time and occasion for joyous celebration and for serious meditation and reflection as well.

What if Jesus had never been born? Shall we assume that if He had not been born, and no divine messenger of so-called Christian philosophy had come to man personally to preach, the beautiful points of the Christian creed would never have been revealed to man? Shall we assume that if Jesus had not been born the world would have continued evolving in its religious, philosophical thought in lines and paths having their foundation in so-called paganism, heathenism, and the Jewish religion? Or would the decalogue or Ten Commandments which Moses gave to the world have eventually served, evolving civilization as a sufficient foundation for a proper guide in life? Is it not true—or are we sadly mistaken in believing—that just as the birth of Jesus marks a turning point, a pivot in the popular calendar, so His birth, His life, His ministry, mark a turning point in the evolution of civilization?

It may be true that man has adopted in only a limited way the ideals taught by Jesus, and it may be true that the followers of Christ and the Christian religion represent only a small portion of the population of the world; but is it not equally true that Christianity as a religious, moral, and ethical code, as a human philosophy, as a workable guide in our daily lives, is closely associated with the highest advancement of civilization in most of the progressive countries of the world? True, Christian nations, while chanting or singing the Christian songs and adoring Jesus the Christ as their Saviour and leader, still indulge in war and still violate even the fundamental principles of brotherly love. But can we successfully and logically separate the greatest advancement and achievements in

civilization among the most progressive nations, from the growth and development, the understanding and acceptance of Christian philosophy?

It is true that in the Orient and other places where the Christian religion has never been well-established, or been a dominating influence, civilization has advanced also. It is doubtful if the Christian religion and its doctrines could have become a dominating influence in those countries because of the nature and tendencies of the people. Their own religions, gradually evolving to higher and broader standards, have probably served them better. But in the Western world and among the most progressive nations, pristine Christianity or the fundamental principles of Christianity have unquestionably proved to be the necessary saving and inspiring philosophy to further the individual and national evolution. On the other hand, the beautiful thoughts and noble doctrines of the Jewish faith as laid down by their patriarchs and unfolded by their learned Rabbis has aided another large portion of the world to attain great heights in culture and spirituality.

Good Will

All of these things should be given thought during the Christmas and holiday season, for while we are rejoicing in the opportunity which the holidays afford for the expression of mutual good-will, we should be thankful that the Cosmic has made possible the inspiring revelations from the consciousness of God to the heart and mind of man through the messengers who have served man in the past.

As we all come to learn of our Divine heritage and come to fully understand what is meant by the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, we will come to think alike more often and to be in greater agreement and harmony in our thinking and acting and the inevitable result will be universal peace. But until we do understand alike, think alike, and act alike, until we do harmonize in understanding, all of the essential factors of human existence on earth, there is no hope for that universal peace for which we pray. The spirit of intolerance



must be laid aside. The importance of national and political discussions must be brought to an end through looking upon these things as secondary to the fact that we are children of Light in the Kingdom of God with one great Supreme Father and with universal de-

sires, ambitions, and requirements that are identical. We will love each other the more when we understand each other better and through such understanding and love will the Kingdom of God on earth be brought into realization.



A Seed

By THEA BRITON, F.R.C.



SEED is a memory and a magnet, enclosed within a casing for protection.

The seed of an oak is a memory of a previous oak, not just a tree as we see it, but of each cell which composed it: of the arrangement of all those cells, a knowledge of their contents, how these were formed and piled one upon another; of the timing for the building of the root, the trunk, stems, branches, to keep always the right balance of form; when to start building buds for Spring, when to start unfolding these buds, and all the rest of the processes which go to the making of an oak tree in all its glory. All of that belongs to the memory, the instinct, of the seed.

The magnet is the power to attract and assimilate all the elements necessary for all this building. Even so, it is the memory which controls the actual assimilation—so much of this element, so much of that, mingled in a certain way to make a leaf cell, and in just a little different way to make a trunk cell or a bark cell. Also, if some materials are not available in sufficient quantities (say water in a dry season), then it is memory which decides to cut down the size of the leaves or the length of a branch, and still keep the general balance of the tree. The pattern of the whole tree is the chief end

and everything else must be adjusted into this pattern.

Thus, if two elements are required for use in a combination of 3 to 1, and there is plenty and to spare of the '3' element, then the proportion of 3 to 1 must be kept and the rest of the '3' element repulsed; otherwise, the balance of the combination would be lost.

This memory belongs to the consciousness of the tree, but the continuity of the consciousness—that is, the memory part—is the most essential factor. Without it there would be nothing to prevent the oak seed from growing into a poppy, or a daisy seed growing into a beetroot.

Of course the present consciousness in an oak tree packs into each seed the chief characteristics of the present oak, to be used as a magnetic force for the surrounding elements when that seed starts building on its own—just as a traveling carpenter packs into his bag the tools he will need on his next job. Even so, these characteristics must be guided by memory; otherwise, they could not deal satisfactorily with the elements they attract. The whole secret of building elements is the proportion of each that has to be put into any combination, and that of course depends on memory.

Therefore the chief content of any seed is memory; in fact, a seed is memory made tangible.

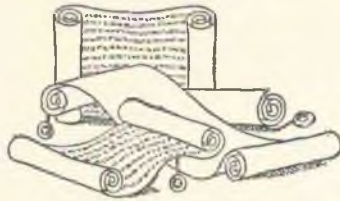
Applied Christianity

By RALPH M. LEWIS, F.R.C.

LESSON ONE

SOME persons need only a word, an occasion, or an incident of some kind as an excuse to escape from the cares and responsibilities of their everyday life. This period of the year affords these persons this opportunity of escape. In the prevalent holiday atmosphere with its tinsel and sham, artificiality sustained by commercial enterprise, multitudes indulge in frivolity. However, the occasion has a far deeper significance, as well. In this season of the year, great numbers of persons are paying homage to the nativity of Jesus. In fact, there are some seven hundred million persons in the world today who profess to be Christians. They acclaim Christmas as a sacred day.

Agnostics and skeptics generally decline to accept the traditional accounts relative to the immaculate conception of Jesus. Also millions of persons are inclined to discredit the exegetical records which relate the divine origin of Jesus. Nevertheless, from the historical viewpoint and from the strictly rational point of view, these same skeptics cannot deny the *symbolic* importance of Jesus. To vast multitudes he stands as symbolic of a spiritual ideal. In this sense, he is in the same category as the cross, the Bible, or as any other hagiography, or sacred work. Even if Jesus as a person, or the traditions which surround him, could not be substantiated by any evidential matter, the story of Jesus represents a kind of thought and a way of life for vast numbers of people. Even if he were wholly flesh and blood, a mortal, in the physical sense of the word, he must then be accepted as at least the greatest, if not the most enlightened *spiritual leader* known to man.



What are the characteristics of a true leader? What are the qualifications that cause one man to be accepted by his fellows as their leader? Someone has said that a leader is not one who drives masses of people before him, nor is he necessarily one who marches ahead of them and commands them to obey his will. Such action amounts to force, and history has often disclosed that men are ever eager to escape from force. A real leader is one who by his thoughts and by his acts inspires others to follow him. It can be said that a leader is one whom a follower has chosen as his preference, because of the qualifications and the character manifested by the leader.

We shall assume, then, that Jesus remains a leader to many people in this psychological sense; in other words, the magnitude of his life remains an incentive for others to follow. Why, then, is there such a disparity between the traditional life of Jesus and the lives of millions of persons who profess to be Christians? In this Western world, Christianity is eulogized. Innumerable literary works, great masterpieces of art, music, and architecture have been inspired by the life and sayings of Jesus. Again, it must be asked, in the light of these circumstances, why are not the multitudes in the Western world motivated in their personal lives by the precepts expounded by Jesus?

The principal answer to these questions may be found in the very nature and function of religion itself. We all know that religion may mean many things to many persons; in fact, if we were to poll a number of persons as to their understanding of religion we would perhaps find as many different



explanations as there were persons. Collectively, however, religion may be defined as it applies to mankind generally. Among many definitions there is one which, to me, seems to embrace more fully the nature and function of religion as it applies to all men. This definition is: "Religion is the endeavor to secure the conservation of the socially recognized values." To begin to understand this, it is first necessary to realize that religion is not wholly intuitive; it is not just the result of emotion, nor is it in any sense purely intellectual. Rather, it is a combination of these.

Subjective Motivation

The religious impulse begins with the individual's reflection upon his own intense emotional moods. When men begin to contemplate their sentiments, their own fears, their humility, then they are on the threshold of simple religious experience. The deeper and the more complex these feelings of man, the further removed they seem to be from his organic processes. They seem quite distinct and apart from the physical, objective part of himself. This is particularly so when the moods which man experiences appear to be not prompted by, nor the result of, any physical cause or any circumstances of his environment. It is then that they appear to be detached from the physical world. Such experiences suggest to a human being some kinship between the feelings he has and what he conceives to be supernatural forces.

In man's environment, in his objective world, there are conditions and behavior which he confronts and which he finds to be somewhat sympathetic to these profound feelings deep within himself. In other words, in our social life, our relations with fellow men, there are happenings that are gratifying to us in the sense that they satisfy the mysterious impulses within us that are related to our feelings of well-being. As a result, the customs, the beliefs, which create this gratification, become to us *social values* which we want to conserve. Since there seems to be a relationship between them and our inner beings, it is thought that these customs must have been ordained by the supernatural to which man feels

he has a direct attachment. The purpose of religion, then, came to be the proper defining and conserving of these values which man has thought to be for the benefit of humanity.

Religion thus began as a *subjective motivation*; it began as an inexplicable feeling, as various impulses which seem to be struggling for expression within the very breast of man. At least, the mind tries to understand and to formulate into some kind of concept these sensations it experiences. The objectification of religion is the attempt to define the purpose and the ends behind the impulses felt within. When religion loses contact at any time with the inner experiences, with the subjective motivation, and becomes wholly external, then it is nothing more than a spiritless formality. For analogy, no man can really accept a thing as being beautiful to him unless he has first experienced the nature of that thing. The very word *beautiful* has no content apart from the pleasurable sensations of the beautiful thing which have been aroused within man.

Great spiritual leaders, as avatars and founders of religions, have had mystical states of consciousness which resulted in their becoming highly illuminated, that is, possessing transcendental knowledge. No one else, no other human, can have the same moral and intellectual evaluation of life and of human and Cosmic relations, unless he, too, has experienced the same afflatus as these leaders. For further analogy, before two men can compare opinions with respect to some landscape, they must at least have the same vantage point from which to observe that landscape. If one lives in a valley and the other on a mountaintop, and if each has seen the landscape only from his respective position, neither is hardly in a position to make a fair comparison. So, too, until man elevates his consciousness to a proximity to the great spiritual leaders, he is not in a position to compare his evaluation of the moral or spiritual life with theirs.

Spiritual leaders, great masters in the religious sense, intend their messages only as a procedure for men to follow, and from which certain results are to be achieved. The lessons contained within their discourses almost always

require a *personal application* on the part of the devotee if he is to expect the attainment which they have held out as a final reward. Unfortunately, however, most religionists look upon the very words of these spiritual leaders as material keys which in some magical way will unlock external powers in the immediate outer world. As a result, they fail to discover within themselves the ecstasy, that sublime happiness expounded by the great teachers and which their messages were intended to develop within the individual.

Are Spiritual Intermediaries Necessary?

Down through the centuries, some men have set themselves apart from their fellows and have offered themselves as intermediaries between those who have failed in their personal aspirations and the divine source itself. The world knows these intermediaries as shamans, as magicians, and as various kinds of *priests*. These intermediaries assume to interpret the messages and the principles expounded by the great luminaries and the founders of the religions. As a consequence, the intermediaries *formalize* by various means the spiritual gleanings of these great teachers into restrictive dogma—into word-bound concepts. Further, these intermediaries, by professing to have some special endowment and by setting themselves aside from the rest of men, have come to give their decrees a kind of false authority. As a result of this practice, there have sprung up systematic religious instructions known as *theology*. From these theologies, from these little spheres of personal interpretation, are born sects, with their variations of religious creeds.

Those without inner satisfaction, those still remaining restless in spirit, even though they may have affiliated with a sect, eventually become critical of these externalities of religion. They find, or imagine they do, deficiencies in the creeds to which they have subscribed, or within the ritual or ceremonies of the sect. They come to hunt for flaws in the human equation of spiritual truths. They act like a man trying to remove an imperfection from a gem by grinding it and grinding it until he has finally ground it into dust. In other words, by theological dialectics,

by continuous, exhaustive argument about some variation of a creed, they remove themselves and their fine points of distinction further and further from the masses of other believers and thinkers. Finally, they come to the point of believing that the very isolation of their new belief is, in itself, a proof of truth.

Although sincere in what they sought to accomplish, numerous theologies have actually come to lock the mass mind within little circles of sectarianism, confining it within the limits of dogmatic interpretation. Unwittingly, perhaps, if we wish to be generous in our view, theology has prevented millions of persons from developing individually, through inner experience, the religious impulses which, after all, are the basic element of religion. Today, as a consequence, there are multitudes of persons who, because of their personal dissatisfaction, or rather, lack of peace within, have come to consider Christianity as unrelated to practical living. It is true that they and others may be nominal followers of some sect. There is, however, nothing so retarding to real religion as the masses of these mere *nominal followers*. Such masses of persons become nothing more than merely numerical, financial or political factors, with respect to the creed with which they are affiliated.

These nominal followers lack spiritual insight and, for that reason, they cause the vehicle of their faith, their church or sect, to degenerate into nothing more than just a physical organization. It is true that they support its name and support its tradition, but they are unable to infuse their faith with any transcendental qualities that make it truly spiritual. It eventually becomes arrested, if not entirely atrophied. Such followers, having lost the spirit of religion, are thus unable as individuals to confirm its doctrines by means of personal application in their own lives. The doctrines are left without that efficacy that comes from within. This, in turn, seems to further convince these people that Christianity has no practical value, but is merely a sentimental heritage.

A true Christianity, worthy of the name, begins with the very utterances, the sayings attributed directly to Jesus.



A true Christianity consists of reiterating the basic revelations, the *illumination* of the Christ consciousness. It considers such revelations as universal truths as being universally applied to the minds of *all* men in accordance with the level of their consciousness. A true Christianity would need lay down various definitions of the teachings of Jesus for the guidance of its followers. However, it would *not* affirm any one of these definitions as being the absolute truth which all men must accept alike without regard for their personal, inner development. Each man would be permitted to elect, or select, that version of the teachings of Jesus in which, to him, light seemed to dwell—in other words, which would be in accord with his understanding.

Furthermore, a practical Christianity would consist of making the doctrines which it expounded effective in the personal lives of all of its devotees in the affairs of home, business, and of society generally. After all, there can be no greater tribute to any religion than to say that it provides for every phase of human existence, not only in some hereafter, but also here in an everyday world.

Sources of Christian Teachings

What are the pristine teachings of Jesus? From what sources have they descended? What are the very words which lead to inner response, to spiritual satisfaction, which unlock the religious impulse? The common source of information with respect to the life, character, and teachings of Jesus are the three gospels, *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*. These gospels are known as the Synoptic Gospels; they are a synopsis of all that is contained within the New Testament in connection with the life and teachings of Jesus. In fact, *Matthew* and *Mark* constitute a gathering into a continuity of all that Jesus said and did. We might say that they are a form of ancient reporting. The writers of these gospels intended to reduce to formal writing all that had come to them by word of mouth—or, at least, as much as could be revealed.

It is conceded that the Gospel of *Mark*, the oldest of the gospels, was written perhaps about 43 A.D. If this is historically correct, that would be but

a few years after the crucifixion of Jesus. It consists principally of a narration of the life of Jesus, what he did and where he was. Very little of his discourses are contained therein. The Gospels of *Matthew* and *Luke* include practically all of the context of *Mark* insofar as the life of Jesus is concerned; in addition, they also incorporate his teachings and sayings.

As one analyzes *Matthew*, he perceives that generally it appeals to the Gentiles. The Gentiles, as you know, were of Jewish origin; they subscribed in part to the Jewish traditions but were not orthodox insofar as the observance of all of the rabbinical requirements. *Matthew* was, in fact, a Gentile; as a consequence, he emphasizes the *Messianic* aspect of the teachings of Jesus. This was particularly appealing to those of Jewish origin since the Jews had been looking for the fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy which described the coming of another king for their salvation.

It is interesting to note that Jesus' pilgrimage, the manner in which he entered into Jerusalem, appeared as the fulfillment of the prophecy of the coming of such a king. It almost parallels the description that we read in *Zechariah*, Chapter Nine, which gives a prediction of a king entering Jerusalem. Jesus must have known these prophecies, as he was well versed in the rabbinical teachings. The question may be asked: Was his entry into Jerusalem in just this manner intended then to create a sympathetic effect on the Gentiles and to arouse interest on the part of the Jews in his pilgrimage?

The New Testament is quite incomplete with regard to the life and teachings of Jesus. As a matter of fact, all of the recorded incidents about Jesus, the various days and periods of his activities that appear in the Bible, do not exceed a total of fifty days. Were all the intervals between these days an absolute mystery, unknown to anyone else? The answer is *No*. Much of Jesus' life and his principles could not be divulged by *Mark*, *Matthew*, or *Luke*. Further, much that was divulged was later expunged from the Bible by high ecclesiastical councils.

(To be Continued)



ONCE MORE Rosicrucianism is blossoming in Germany, which has now become a separate jurisdiction. A local group has been established in Munich under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Germany and known as the Gustav Meyrink Lodge of AMORC.

* * *

On the morning of September 17, 1950, a new Rosicrucian Temple was dedicated in Rotterdam under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of AMORC of the Netherlands. Grand Master Jan Coops writes that the ceremony was impressive and faultlessly presented. This is worthy of genuine praise since the ritual reached Rotterdam only on the sixteenth and so the officers had less than twenty-four hours in which to perfect themselves in their parts.

* * *

The current bulletin of the New York City Lodge contains articles from two of its members who were in San Jose for the 1950 Convention and RCU. Writes Colombe Marion Sheferd: "A very noticeable and lingering sense of Peace and Love infused the entire four weeks."

The same note is struck in Frater Euclid Bacon's comment: "The tranquillity of the atmosphere surrounding Rosicrucian Park, coupled with the warmth and friendliness of the people towards the Rosicrucians in San Jose, brought about a compelling ease and calm unlike anything ever experienced before."

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And now, believe it or not, the first visitor is already in San Jose for the 1951 Convention. She is Soror Sonia

Denis Tancredi-Celis of Caracas, Venezuela. Arriving too late for one Convention, she just decided to call herself a little early for the next and wait!

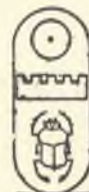
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On October 8, the series of occasional Sunday afternoon talks for the current season began in the Rosicrucian Egyptian and Oriental Museum. Miss Katherine Williams, of the Rose-Croix Research Institute and Rose-Croix University, spoke on "Musical Therapy." Much that she said on the subject grew out of her wide experience with hospitalized war veterans. In connection with general therapy, she referred to finger painting, illustrating her remarks by reference to a group of finger paintings then on exhibit. Most of these were produced by members of the Prometheans, an experimental group studying the subject under the direction of the Rose-Croix Research Institute.

William Lyman Parrish, an Eastern portrait painter lately-come to California, spoke in the Museum on October 15 on the subject of certain techniques in portrait painting. Mr. Parrish used his own portraits for illustration.

▽ △ ▽

Through its Extension Division, the Industrial and Business Training Bureau of the University of Texas has sponsored a state-wide organization among young people known as the Vocational Industrial Club. According to information considered authentic, this year's Club membership will approximate 3500. The State Sponsor of the movement is Frater John W. Curd, whose interest and untiring efforts have been devoted to making this organization outstanding in the field of service to youth.



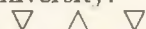
But like many Rosicrucians, Frater Curd's interests are broad—one of them being hand-press printing. He was kind enough to send to Rosicrucian Park his first achievement on his little Kelsey 6x9 press. It carries the note: "This booklet is handset and hand-printed in twelve-point Caslon Old Style by John Curd at Croixcroft Press."

Here is evidence that the true craftsman still is to be found. Frater Curd writes: "I have always had a driving desire to illustrate and publish as many books as my life will permit of all the past great treatises on mysticism. Something like a Limited Editions Club so that the now living can glean from the past the cumulative knowledge of mankind."



The August issue of *The South Carolina Magazine* contained an interesting story of an interesting person—Soror Edna Reed Whaley of Columbia. The daughter of a Tulane University professor and a Kentucky educator, Soror Whaley's life has been rich with many cultural and practical matters. To be the wife of a county court judge and the mother of five children might be said to be the field of her greatest achievement; still one must not forget her creditable work in portraiture, nor her successful organization of the Columbia Art Association which grew into the Columbia Museum of Art—and the Quill, a society of writers. Uniquely enough, one might also call Soror Whaley the restorer of presidents since it was her privilege recently to restore, at the request of the University of South Carolina, the paintings of two presidents, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, which she successfully identified as the long-lost work of Gilbert Stuart. Soror Whaley has long

been a member of the Rosicrucian Order, and some years ago, it may be noted, her son, Dr. Atherton Whaley (also a member), was on the faculty of Rose-Croix University.



Frater John Morrison of Maryland admits that elephants and their psychology are a chief interest of his. He makes some comments apropos the "Can You Explain This?" item of the August *Digest* that prove it. Among other things, he writes: "The pads of an elephant's foot are remarkable for their sensitivity. One might say they possess supersensitivity through the constant necessity to depend upon them since the placement of their eyes precludes their seeing too well where they are stepping—especially in the heavy undergrowth of the jungle. This 'consciousness' in the pads of the foot, then, would explain not only why a circus elephant can step carefully over the body of its trainer without looking at him but also why, in the regions mentioned, the elephant avoids the hard and sharp limestone formations. It is equally possible that the lime deposits themselves irritate the feet. All in all, people who see elephants only occasionally are likely to be deceived if they believe them to be clumsy, slow-moving, and slow-thinking animals."



Hanayama's *Way of Deliverance* goes back to Japan. Soror Lena Garcia, who with her daughter Colombe Gladys and her husband Captain Garcia is living in Japan, has just asked to have a copy of the book sent to her. Soror Garcia writes of their busy days—Frater Garcia with his military duties, Soror Gladys with high school work in Tokyo, and her own activity as Grey Lady with volunteer Red Cross work.



A VITAL CONTRIBUTION

The International Academic Union, as a part of its highly specialized work, is compiling a catalog of Latin manuscripts on Alchemy. This organization is one of the 100 international nongovernmental organizations which are being helped with grants from Unesco. Unesco's interest in the project of cataloging manuscripts dealing with Alchemy is that it constitutes "a vital contribution to the history of science, since alchemy has been called the *"prelude to chemistry."*

*The
Rosicrucian
Digest
December
1950*



Following the Path of Light

CONTRIBUTION OF ARABIC SPAIN TO MYSTICISM

By J. A. Calcaño Calcaño, F. R. C.

Member, Board of Directors of AMORC; Director, Latin-American Division



HISTORY TEACHES us that civilizations or cultures have their cycles of life. They are born, they grow, they attain a glorious climax; later, they decline and disappear. The world has known already a series of different civilizations, some of them brighter than others. Usually each civilization is linked to a certain race or group of people. If we go back to the very early stages of human history, we find as one of the oldest civilizations the one that flourished in that land situated between the two great Assyrian rivers. That was the early Sumerian civilization. At that time Babylon did not exist, and Nineveh was not yet founded. Early Egypt was still a primitive country, very far from cultured. At the time of this early Sumerian culture the center of the civilized world was there; all the other human races and countries were barbarians. The European white man was almost in what we could term an animal stage at that time. He was a savage, as ignorant, primitive and superstitious as a central African savage is today.

Time has been marching on. Today, the nucleus of civilization is in the hands of the man of European origin. Today, if we go to the Assyrian plains, where that first glorious civilization existed, we find only crumbling ruins, and the men we find there, men who

more or less descend from the early races that once were the center of the world, are ignorant, primitive, almost savage men. Perhaps three or four thousand years from now, the descendants of the white man of today may be as ignorant and primitive as the Assyrian of today, while the scepter of civilization may be at that future time in the hands of another race or another group of people of whom we are at present unaware.

What we intend to talk about now is how the light of the mystical teachings passed from one of those cultures to another. We want to trace the path of the eternal light from the old European cultures of the Mediterranean to the present civilization.

In Europe two different civilizations have existed. The first was the old culture of Greece and Rome, the Greco-Latin civilization. It ended when the German barbarian peoples from central and northern Europe invaded the Roman empire. The second European civilization started about the twelfth century and its center was in France at first; it has wandered to Germany, England, Austria, et cetera, and has its more important branch in America today. But in between those two cultures in Europe, there was a period of about one thousand years in which Europe was in a backward stage. That period covered the last centuries of Roman disintegration, the Dark Ages that followed, and the early times of the Middle Ages, when the present



civilization was taking form. During those thousand years, European culture was in a very poor condition; Europe was no longer the center of a civilization. During that period, the great culture that mankind had, was the Arabic world. The Arabic or Islamic civilization was like a patch or a block between the old and the new European cultures.

The old European culture, the civilization of Greece and Rome, the so-called Greco-Latin civilization had its mystic teachings from the still older and previous Egyptian culture, to which were added later some of the mysteries from other places of the Near East: from Syria, Persia, and other places. The Greek tradition consisted of the Eleusinian mysteries, the Orphic mysteries, the Pythagorean Order and some other schools of the mysteries. All of these had their branches in Rome later, and not so long ago archaeologists found near Rome, on the way from Rome to Naples, a subterranean temple of the Pythagoric Order, which was closely studied by Frater Malinger, Chancellor of the FUDOSI.

To those mystical schools of ancient Rome were added some Oriental cults in later times, as the cult of Mithra, from the fire religion of the Persians; the cult of Astarte, from Asia Minor; the Egyptian mysteries of Isis and Osiris, and several others. Most of these had their inner initiatic circles. Other branches of the Great Brotherhood developed still later on, during the Latin empire, as the Therapeuti, the Essenes and in the very latest centuries of that culture, already within Christian times, were introduced the Gnostics and lastly the Neo-Platonists. These two last ones had their main centers in Alexandria, the magnificent city founded by Alexander the Great in Egypt, but their world of conceptions belonged to the Roman civilization and not to the Egyptian one, which was already finished by that time.

Chaos

When the barbaric tribes from the North, the uncultured peoples from central and northern Europe, invaded the Roman empire and swept and destroyed all the established standards of civilization, all that esoteric knowledge

began to wane, and finally disappeared when the first Christian emperors fostered an early fanaticism, and trying to get political support from the early churches began a steady and long persecution that eventually wiped out everything that was not accepted by the first theologians. It is well known that the esoteric message of Christianity, the inner occult circle of the new movement, was lost during the early centuries after Christ. In fact, the Gnostics belonged to that inner circle which possessed the secret tradition, and when the action of the early church began to be more political and less mystical that inner circle was rejected by the new priests and theologians, and its light was spent. All other schools which kept the esoteric knowledge were persecuted, disbanded, exterminated.

At that time a kind of frenzy or madness ran through most of Europe. All wanted to do away with habits and customs, with accepted and traditional ideas. All was gradually destroyed. People began to dress in another fashion. Houses were built according to new styles. Ideas changed. Everything was considered from another angle, and all those factors produced a kind of chaos which engulfed the old culture, the old knowledge, the old standards. All the more or less civilized land was divided in two great portions: the Western empire, with Rome as its capital; and the Eastern empire with its capital in Byzantium, which is our present Constantinople. The Eastern empire, the Byzantine empire, lived more or less isolated during many centuries; all became stagnant there, without any new life, dying slowly for many, many years. Its history is a separate chapter from the history of Europe because that empire had no intercourse with the rest of the world, and took and gave almost nothing during all that time.

But in the Western half, things were going on, and gradually the Dark Ages descended upon that land. It was in some way a kind of Obscure Night which later turned into the dawn of our present civilization.

It was during this confused period, when Europeans had lost their old cul-

ture and had not yet established a new one, that Arabia began to awake for the first time. The Arabs were a very primitive and ignorant people. Mohammed was born and began to preach his teachings. The people were stirred, and in a short period, all the Arabian nations found themselves well ahead on the road to a very high civilization and to the most prominent position as a political and military power. They conquered first all Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Persia, Egypt, all the coast of north Africa, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eastern Africa, and centuries later extended over Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Turkestan, India. It was a larger empire than the Romans ever had in their hands.

Those uncultured nomads of the desert were taken by the life wave of the Cosmic, and unexpectedly were raised to astonishing heights of civilization and knowledge. They invented architectural styles that were more delicate, ornate, and beautiful than anything the world had seen before. Their carpets, their dresses, their ceramics, their weapons, their pageantry, were full of new beauty never dreamed before. Their poets wrote the most beautiful poems. We know some of those names: Omar Khayyám, Ferdusi, Hafiz. Their scientists surpassed all those previously known. They excelled in medicine, astronomy, music, history, chemistry. Their mathematicians went further than anyone before. They invented the numerical system we are using today, which was fundamental for the development of the higher mathematics. They discovered, or rather invented algebra. Our present-day mathematics owe more to the Arabs than to any other people. Commerce and trade found new ways and systems. Large maritime enterprises were undertaken and the Arab merchants covered almost the whole earth.

Invasion of Europe

The Arabs, conquerors in Asia, conquerors in Africa, were a serious danger for Europe. We have already seen that Europe at that time was in a chaotic state. After conquering all the north coast of Africa, across the Mediterranean from Europe, the Arabs finally took one more step and invaded

Europe. They conquered almost the whole of Spain, and parts of Italy. But when they crossed the Pyrenees mountains into France, they were defeated in a battle by the French and that single battle, won by Charles Martel in Poitiers, stopped forever the Arabian advance in Europe.

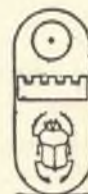
The Arabic cycle in Spain was most important. That Semitic culture was in full activity in the Spanish peninsula. The Caliphs, the Emirs, and later the Taifa kingdoms achieved a very high culture. And there, as everywhere in the Arabic world, the Islamic religion was the foundation of their civilization.

In dark Europe all religious or mystic manuscripts that were not orthodox were destroyed; the Arabs, although they also destroyed part of that ancient lore at the beginning, preserved it afterwards. The mystical schools of Islamism began to spread their light. The Sufis began to teach and write. Some of their more important mystics are: Saadi, more or less well-known; Al Ghazali, who was Spanish and perhaps the greatest of their mystics; Al Biruni, who was also a great astronomer and astrologer; Geber, the great alchemist; Avicenna, Rahzis, Averroes, and many others well known in the philosophical, alchemical, or mystical fields.

Arabian Mystical Schools

Very early the Arabs started their military Orders, called *Ribats*, which were the forerunners of the European Orders, military and mystic at the same time, as the Knights of the Temple, the Knights of Malta, the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, and others. During the ninth and tenth centuries, the Arabs had in Spain several secret schools and mystical monasteries for the esoteric mysteries. One of those was in the mountain of Abenmasarra, and another was in the Mochehid of Elvira, near the city of Cordova. It is well known, and quoted in the histories of that time, that in these monasteries the disciples studied philosophy and the occult sciences. At the time of the early Caliphs we know that in Spain several secret mystical societies were in activity, but their work was concealed;

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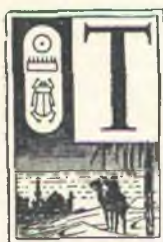




SANCTUM MUSINGS

THE CHRISTMAS STAR

By RODMAN R. CLAYSON, Grand Master



THE stars belong to Christmas, for they are definitely a part of it, just as are the Christmas trees, the holly wreaths, and the Christmas carols. It always seems that some magic pervades the heavens during the Christmas season, adding new beauty that is missing at other times. As we search the night sky, watching the stars that are familiar and yet conspicuously remote, our thoughts wander back to the first Christmas of long ago. The reasons underlying the association of stars with Christmas have their origin in man's heritage of religion, mythology, history, and science. There is also a relation to the sun, which is our daytime star.

In many countries today there prevails a legend that the sun was conceived on the first day of spring, March 21. In certain religions this is known as Annunciation Day, or the announcement of the incarnation of Jesus. Nine months later, according to the legend, the sun was born at the time of the winter solstice at Christmas time.

Many centuries ago Christian people celebrated the nativity on the sixth day of January, according to the calendar which we now use. A pagan festival to the sun was also held at the time of the winter solstice which occurs about the 22nd of December. This is the time when the sun reaches the point farthest south, in its apparent journey, and

starts again moving toward the north. To pagan people the sun seemed to turn back in answer to prayers; this was an occasion for a celebration. So the leaders of the Church in early days moved the date of the nativity to the approximate date of the winter solstice so that there would be thanksgiving and rejoicing for the two separate occasions on the newly established date. This eventually became December 25, which we celebrate as Christmas.

Unfortunately there is no record of the day, month, and year of the birth of the Master Jesus. It is believed by many that His birth took place in the spring of the year. This belief is based on the Biblical story where it is said that the shepherds were in the field watching their flocks by night. It was only at that particular time of the year, when the new lambs were being born, that the shepherds of Judea kept nighttime vigil over their sheep.

An Age-Old Question

To determine what astronomical occurrence could account for the Star of Bethlehem, scientists have searched through their records for evidence of some unusual happening. Astronomers have endeavored to determine just what it was that appeared as a star to the Wise Men of the East. It must be very frankly admitted that a definite answer is not possible. Some believe that the star the Wise Men saw was a vision that appeared to them alone. But it

must be remembered that many phenomena which were once looked upon as miracles have since been explained in scientific terms.

In the light of modern astronomical knowledge we may attempt to determine whether anything may have appeared in the heavens at the time of the first Christmas which might have been interpreted as the famous Star. At first it might seem a very simple matter merely to reconstruct the sky picture or stars of the sky as they were at the time of the nativity, and so determine what conspicuous object might have been seen. This, indeed, would not be too difficult but for the absence of one essential fact: the lack of agreement today as to the precise year that the birth of the Master occurred. It is not mentioned in the Scriptures, and there is disagreement among historians.

The Roman abbot, Dionysius, who introduced the use of B. C. and A. D. in reckoning dates, placed the year of nativity at 4 B. C. This was accepted for several hundred years, although we now feel that it is incorrect. In the New Testament we find that the *birth of the Lord* occurred during the reign of Herod. The historian, Josephus, established the date of the death of Herod as 4 B. C.

Ever since that eventful occasion when the Wise Men came from the East to Bethlehem, and said, "We have seen His star in the East, and have come to worship Him," questioning man has puzzled over an explanation for the Star of Bethlehem. Science has evolved hypothetical answers to the age-old question, but admits in the same breath that perhaps there is no explanation.

Josephus mentioned that there was a lunar eclipse before Herod died. Astronomers, figuring back, now advise that there was an eclipse of the moon at that time, and it could have been seen at Jericho in the year 4 B. C. in the month of March. An eclipse of the moon, as we know, is not an infrequent or unusual occurrence, yet the eclipse of the full moon would have made the stars of the night appear much brighter, thus intensifying the light of any particular outstanding celestial object which may have been in the sky at that time.

It is safe to assume that the Magi were more than casually acquainted with the stars. This being so, the regular motion of the planets and the stars would not have seemed extraordinary to them, while on the other hand they would undoubtedly have taken note of anything unusual appearing in the heavens.

Chinese records tell us that a new star or nova appeared in the heavens in 4 B. C. This is not an unusual occurrence, for not only are new stars now appearing from time to time, but they have always done so for the appreciation of those who make a study of the night sky. Just why a new star or

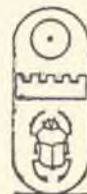
nova suddenly releases a great store of energy is one of the mysteries which astronomers are endeavoring to solve today. The famous astronomer of the seventeenth century, Johannes Kepler, suggested that the Christmas Star may have been a nova which burst forth in great brilliance, only to fade after the occasion and remain a faint star ever after.

In the year 7 B. C. there was an unusual conjunction, or passing of one by the other, of the planets *Jupiter*



By Lester L. Libby, M.S., F.R.C.
Director, AMORC Technical Dept.

- A recently-discovered ice-filled basin in Northern Quebec, believed to be of meteoric origin, is two and one-half miles in diameter and may well be the largest such crater known to man. Canadian geologists estimate its age to be between 3000 and 5000 years; they are planning expeditions to investigate it thoroughly.
- Scientists at the Mayo Clinic have recently perfected an electronic device which automatically controls the administration of anaesthetics to patients. Because electrical potentials from the patient's brain vary with the depth of anaesthesia, use is made of these potentials to control a servomechanism which regulates the amount of anaesthetic being delivered to the patient.
- Special photographic plates carried 100 miles aloft in a recent V-2 rocket flight show that cosmic ray activity is three times as profuse as it is at the 20-mile altitude commonly reached by using free balloons.



and *Saturn*; in fact, *Jupiter* and *Saturn* were in conjunction three times in that year—in May, September, and December. This extraordinary event occurs once every 854 years. This unusual occurrence must have struck awe in the hearts of the astrologers of the East who spent their lives following the movements of the heavenly bodies which, in those days, seemed unpredictable and mysterious.

The Wise Men Knew

It is said that at that time there was a prophecy, known throughout the East, that a Messiah was to come to save the world. If the Wise Men had thought the unusual conjunctions of *Jupiter* and *Saturn* in the year 7 B.C. of sufficient importance, it may have started them on their way from Persia to Bethlehem, which is a distance of about 1,000 miles. The first conjunction occurred in the month of May; therefore, while traveling they would have seen the second conjunction in September, and it is just possible that they would have arrived at Bethlehem to see the third conjunction which, according to our calendar, occurred on December 15.

It is not hard to imagine that the irregular meanderings of *Jupiter* and *Saturn* fired the imaginations of the Wise Men, especially early in the year 6 B.C. when *Mars* joined with *Jupiter* and *Saturn* to form a triangle in the night sky. This may also have been taken as the Sign that caused the Wise Men to set out from the East to seek the promised Messiah King. It is said that in September of the year 6 B.C. the triangular formation of *Jupiter*, *Saturn*, and *Mars*, could be seen throughout the entire night. The Magi could have seen this formation due south of Jerusalem pointing the way to Bethlehem and Judea.

The Wise Men, belonging as they did to the old caste of Persian Magi, unfortunately had been taught by generations of soothsayers to utter their statements ambiguously. They did not state clearly whether the star was shining in the East or the West. They saw it while they were still in the East before they journeyed west to Jerusalem. Perhaps everybody remembers the following statement from the Bible:

“... lo, the star, which they saw in the East, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.” It is impossible for a planet or star to stand still. The Magi may have meant that the star traveled faster than they, and that it arrived at Bethlehem before they did, so that they saw it (according to an old legend) reflected in the water of a well when they entered the town. In those days a conspicuous conjunction was frequently believed to herald the birth of royalty.

Could a meteor or a comet have been the Christmas Star? If a meteor had been seen at this time it is not likely that it would have been recognized as a sign of special significance, for meteors are transient and of very short duration. History tells us that the Christmas Star blazed in the sky for several nights, and that perhaps it was meant to guide the Magi in their quest.

A comet might have had some bearing upon the matter. Astronomical records show the appearance of a comet in the year 4 B.C., and this was no less than Halley's Comet which passed our way in 1910. This comet is seen regularly every 76 years. In 1910 Halley's Comet was visible in our night sky for about nine weeks during the months of May and June. It was a tremendously bright object with an extremely long tail arching its pathway across the heavens. A comet of such brilliance and proportion occurred in the year 4 B.C., and might have had some significance as the Christmas Star.

We have, then, these many possibilities: the nova; the conjunction of the planets *Jupiter* and *Saturn*; the triangulation of *Jupiter*, *Saturn*, and *Mars*; and the comet. And there are other possibilities that are less plausible. Perhaps it is just as well that we cannot definitely say, but certainly this does not detract from the beauty of the thought, nor does it dim the inspiration brought to men's hearts by the story of the Christmas Star seen by the Magi long ago.

There has been, and perhaps always will be, much discussion from time to time concerning the Star of the East. That a bright object was in the heavens at the date of the nativity is not questioned. Nevertheless, it is a curious

coincidence that one of the greatest of astronomical events—the conjunction of two planets three times in the same year—occurred just before the birth of the most outstanding man in history. Whether or not it was a star that the Wise Men saw or some other celestial object is not of too great importance to us, although it is obvious that an appearance of some brilliant celestial object started the Wise Men on their journey, and has had a tremendous effect

upon the development, culture, and civilization of man.

And so at the Christmas season we are reminded of the Master Jesus and His work which was heralded so long ago by the bright shining object in the night sky as seen by the Wise Men in the East. Perhaps the spirit of the season will take root in the hearts of men and women and manifest in every act and thought during each day of the year.

FOLLOWING THE PATH OF LIGHT

(Continued from Page 419)

one of these was the school of the Moridín, *moridín* meaning *adepts*. The leader of this school in 1144 was Aben-casi, famous mystic master of the time. Another prominent mystic was Aben-barrachán, who also was the head of another of the mystery schools and was the teacher of Mohidín Abenarabí, one of the greatest of Islamic mystics, undoubtedly connected with the traditional teachings of the Great Brotherhood.

The Persian mystical Order of the "Brothers of Purity" was introduced in Madrid in the year 1004 by Maslama. Another mystical school was active in Granada in the twelfth century, under the leadership of Abenshlo-el-Darir, most famous adept, who was at the same time a distinguished alchemist and a celebrated mathematician; he was well known for his great psychic development, and his school was attended not only by Arabs and Moors, but also by Jews and Christians, who traveled from Toledo and Baeza to receive his teachings. As can be seen by the few quotations we have made, the Arabs had in Spain not just one little school somewhere, but rather a large movement with several schools and different branches all over that country, including formal monasteries. Besides, the Arabs had preserved many of the writings of the ancient mystics that had been destroyed in Europe. All along their passage through Syria, Palestine, Asia Minor, and Egypt, they had preserved many precious manuscripts, not only mystical, but also philosophical, scientific, and literary, which at that time no longer existed in Europe. All these went to Spain

with the teachings; and scholars from many parts of Europe, including France, Austria, and Germany, went to Spain to translate into Latin or other languages, some of the books of antiquity preserved by the Arabs. On the other hand, we cannot so easily forget that it was one of the great Arabic leaders, Omar the Conqueror, who burned the celebrated library at Alexandria, where we lost a great treasure of the highest learning.

"Golden Age" of Israel

But the Arabic culture in Spain had something else to offer: it was the so-called Jewish "golden age." Let us consider this important development.

The Arab rulers were not outstanding for their tolerance. On the contrary, at the beginning and towards the end of their cultural period, there were persecutions and fanaticism, religious intolerance, and destruction. All of this was directed mostly against the Christian peoples, and this in turn was due to Christian intransigency and to political wars. But toward other sects and creeds which did not antagonize Mohammedan ways and ideas, the Arabs were more tolerant.

It was in this way that the Jewish people, scattered throughout the Arabic empire, were free to pursue their Jewish cultural aims to a considerable degree. In Spain, Jewish culture achieved, under Arabic rule, one of the most important periods of Hebrew culture. Science, letters, philosophy, and mysticism attained a peak in Jewish history, and historians call this time the "golden age" of Israel.



Some of the greatest names among the Jewish people, outside of Biblical times, belong to the Spanish Golden Age. Authors as outstanding as Jehudah Halevy, the two Benezras; philosophers like Moses Ben Maimon, the most distinguished commentator of the classical Hebrew writings, and Solomon Bengabirol, also called *Avicbron*, belong to this time and place. Of greatest importance to us is Moses from Cordoba, who wrote the *Zohar*, which is the foundation of all Cabalistic writings. Jews introduced in Spain, and subsequently in the rest of Europe, the Cabalistic tradition and Cabalistic magic, and a rich Biblical lore which is a treasure for the mystic student.

So we see that during the Dark Ages and early Middle Ages, there was an extraordinary mystical activity in Arabic Spain. The rest of Europe was more or less isolated from Spain, and had few contacts. But gradually, all this light spread to the rest of Europe. We owe to the Arabs the early knowledge of the Neo-Platonicians, which is nothing else than the teachings of the Egyptian Brotherhood. We owe to the Arabs the introduction of alchemy into Europe, and it was under this form of teachings that the early European Rosicrucians taught the truths they possessed. We owe to the Spanish Jews all our knowledge of the Cabala and of Magic, all closely connected with early Rosicrucian movements. From the Arabic mystery schools in Spain came those great mystics as Raymond Lully, Arnaldus de Villanova, and all the schools of the Illuminati which flourished in Toledo and other places until they were persecuted, later on, by the Inquisition, under the Spanish

Catholic kings. Such great French mystics as Flamel and his predecessors owe their light to the Hebrew tradition of Spain. And even in much later times Martinez de Pasqually, founder of the Martinist Order, proceeded from this same fountain of sacred knowledge.

It was, then, through Spain and through the Arabic world that the light in Europe was restored after the Dark Ages. It is true that besides this channel, the French emperor Charlemagne sent a mission to the Near East (which was also Arabic) in order to bring the hidden light, and it is also true that this eminent ruler started a secret school in France, to which he himself did not belong, but this French infiltration was not comparable in extent to the Arabic contribution through Spain. This contribution to esoteric knowledge in Europe also worked, in a lesser degree, through Italy, mostly through Sicily, and this was the origin of the early Italian schools, one of which was the Pythagoric, together with the Rosicrucian. To these schools belonged early great mystics like Petrus Abanus, and later on Picus de Mirandola and many others.

All this historical period we have been considering is not very well known from our point of view, and we need more research in this field. Still the works of this period that we can read today are as enlightening to us as they were to the Arabic, Jewish, or European mystic scholars ten centuries ago.

Arabic Spain was one of the important landmarks along the path followed by the tradition of Light from East to West, in accordance with the mysterious ways of Cosmic.

THREE INITIATIONS

The Benjamin Franklin Lodge, 1303 West Girard Avenue, Philadelphia 32, Pennsylvania, will confer upon all eligible AMORC members the following initiations on the specified dates:

On Sunday, December 10, 1950, at 3 p. m.—Second Degree.

On Sunday, January 28, 1951, at 3 p. m.—First Degree.

On Sunday, February 18, 1951, at 3 p. m.—Ninth Degree.



The "Cathedral of the Soul" is a Cosmic meeting place for all minds of the most highly developed and spiritually advanced members and workers of the Rosicrucian fraternity. It is the focal point of Cosmic radiations and thought waves from which radiate vibrations of health, peace, happiness, and inner awakening. Various periods of the day are set aside when many thousands of minds are attuned with the Cathedral of the Soul, and others attuning with the Cathedral at the time will receive the benefit of the vibrations. Those who are not members of the organization may share in the unusual benefits as well as those who are members. The book called *Liber 777* describes the periods for various contacts with the Cathedral. Copies will be sent to persons who are not members if they address their requests for this book to Friar S.P.C., care of AMORC Temple, San Jose, California, enclosing three cents in postage stamps. (*Please state whether member or not—this is important.*)

THE GREATEST GIFT



AT THIS season when giving is accepted as a tradition, we pause to consider what it is that constitutes a gift. A simple or elementary concept of a gift is *something for nothing*. To receive something of value for which no value or expenditure of energy is given is to have added to our material possessions something that is free—we hope even free of obligation—and therefore of no mental or material effort to obtain. Everyone likes to receive a gift. The truth of this fact is borne out by the gift appeal that is so common today in various forms of advertising and entertainment. People literally by the thousands enter contests in which a minimum expenditure of energy and money is required, with

the hope or even the expectation of receiving in return something of much greater value.

It is because of this concept that gifts and the tradition of giving is tied up closely with our materialistic concepts. On every side of us during this season of the year, we find every incentive and convenience that will assist us in giving. The actual spirit of giving is frequently subordinated to the process of giving. The true Christmas spirit was based upon the principle that it is better to give than to receive. Today it is questionable whether most people really believe this principle, or whether it is not actually true that the reverse is prevalent in the minds of many.

This acceptance of the idea of its being a privilege to receive is not limited to children only but is also common



among adults. There is a degree of danger in this concept because it takes away the intangible considerations of the gift. I believe that every individual remembers something of very little or no material value that he had received as a gift and has kept in remembrance of the giver, or the thoughtfulness under which it was given, rather than for the intrinsic value of the gift itself. Some simple item of no practical use may convey the spirit of humanity or brotherly love and the ideal relationships that should exist between men far more effectively than will the most elaborate or most expensive gift. If we accept with some reservations the prevalent concept of a gift as being something for nothing, there are still many things which we have been privileged to receive that may not add greatly to our material wealth, but which have come to us through little effort and actually as gifts with no obligations attached.

Values

Our common concept of value is dual. The value can be the method or means by which a thing is obtained, or it can be in the intrinsic value of the thing itself. Something for which we have worked hard takes on value in memory of our effort, desire, and willingness to give of ourselves to obtain it. It is usually conceded that that which comes to us through effort carries more value than that which is given us without any obligation or effort. It is true that this intangible value that is added to the intrinsic value of an object is only a value which we ourselves can appreciate. It is important that we consider occasionally that, after all, in those intangible values are the real values.

It is conceivably possible that anyone can become the possessor of precious stones or valuable metals. The intrinsic value of these things is the same regardless of the process by which they come into an individual's possession. The intangible values which any such item may possess is added to the intrinsic value through the history of its acquisition, and the meaning behind the acquisition adds something to these material things that no one else can possibly find in them.

In this sense we might look upon the greatest gift of all for man—the gift of being. This is the very essence of life itself. It is a gift in the sense that we receive life and existence without giving of any of our own values or even making any sacrifice or expending any energy, insofar as we as individuals are concerned. The gift of being and of life carries with it potentialities and attributes which we can constantly develop and put to use in attempting to acquire those things which add to the enjoyment of all other material and immaterial things. Without life there would be no object in giving or receiving. There would be no recipient to receive, no values to be exchanged. Life is the fundamental and greatest gift that anyone has ever received. Even peace of mind and immortality, two things most desired by men, become secondary in relation to the gift of being since they are the results of the first, of the continuity of life itself.

Viewpoints

Earliest man necessarily gave most of his attention to the acquisition of those things received either through effort or as gifts from someone else that would make him comfortable. Food, protection from the elements, comfort, were his primary objectives from day-to-day living. He may have had little time to think constructively beyond the level of physical comfort. Today, however, man has built for himself a more complex environment. He lives in a world where everything that he is to obtain is based upon the elementary fact of his utilization of the life force for his pleasure and benefit, and for extending these pleasures and benefits to other human beings like himself.

At this Christmas Season it will be to the advantage of each individual to renew in his own consciousness the awareness of the fact that the greatest gift he has ever received and will ever possess is the gift of being, and to use this time given in an attempt to exemplify the concepts of peace and good will so that he can renew in his own consciousness the useful potentialities of his own development and of his own growth. In this manner he can promote the establishment of his own peace of mind and gain in his con-

sciousness the concept of immortality going on forever into the greater and wider fields of experience, contentment, happiness, and satisfaction. As the individual becomes conscious of these possibilities, he can then practice

the spirit of the season by attempting to give to others this same concept of life everlasting and the right of man to be able to advance in wisdom and experience toward the mind of the Creator.

Gustav Meyrink

THE MYSTIC OF LAKE STARNBERG

By CHERDYL W. RETTICH-HAIDYL

An authorized translation, from the German, by Albert Bolze



THE WORK OF the Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis has been resumed in Germany. The first local lodge was opened in Munich. It is called the Gustav Meyrink Lodge. In this name, homage is being paid to a mystic who as one of Germany's most successful novelists saw a mission in his literary contributions dealing with the spiritual rebirth of man.

Meyrink's profound knowledge, which he acquired as a Rosicrucian, was advantageously expressed in numerous of his world-renowned novels. *The Golem*, *The Green Face*, *The Angel at the Western Window*, and *The White Dominican* are a few of his valuable storehouses of mystical wisdom. By these works, many materialistic-minded readers were shaken out of their lethargy into happiness. As a poet, Meyrink's style is vivid and enthralling, and so highly suggestive of the hidden mysteries of life as to awaken in the reader a consciousness of the magical faculties ingrained in the soul of man.

Gustav Meyrink was one of the Illuminati who have a lodge in Milan. His earthly career came to an end on December 4, 1932, at his home, the *Haus zur letzten Laterne*. This idyllic villa, with its magnificent view of the lake and the Bavarian mountains, was unfortunately destroyed as a result of the war.

Quite recently, we had an opportunity to visit the widow of Gustav Meyrink at her present home in Starnberg. Mrs. Mena Meyrink is an unusually warm-hearted and kind lady,

whose mental vitality stands in strong contrast to her age of seventy-eight years. She calls herself "the happiest woman on earth" and lives only in the memory and remembrance of her husband, with whom she led a happy married life lasting several decades. The exquisite harmony of this marriage was aptly expressed by Gustav Meyrink when he said: "My wife is a mystic of the heart, while I am a mystic of the spirit." Can anyone find a better expression for a perfect harmony of the masculine and the feminine polarities?

When Mrs. Meyrink tells of the days gone-by, her words become a song of grateful love to her transfigured husband. Her speech is so vibrant that even the furniture and the other objects seem to become imbued with life. The big, high-backed armchair in which the poet died, the bench he sat on when he wrote, the large manuscript rack, which he made himself, the extensive library, with shelves of treasured books reaching to the ceiling, are silent yet eloquent witnesses of the life and the work of this great master.

Mrs. Meyrink kept reverting to his last hours on this earth. On December 3, a Friday, he told her that he was soon going to "pass into the light." He requested to be put into his armchair, since he did not want to die in bed. He made his relatives promise not to give him any narcotics whatsoever, although he was suffering bad pains. He promised his wife that, if such should be possible, he would help her from the other side. On Saturday, at 7 a.m., the master's life withdrew from its earthly shell. He spent his final hours in Yogin posture, breathing consciously, his face



turned toward the East. Shortly before transition his eyes grew larger and larger, and his face became smaller and smaller. His eyes expressed an indescribable harmony and benevolence.

Spiritual Compensation

Four days after her husband's death, Mrs. Meyrink's pain and sorrow was suddenly transmuted into an overflowing sense of beatitude, an intoxicating feeling of happiness, which has stayed with her unto this very day. Thus did Gustav Meyrink keep his promise to help his mate from the other side. With the falling of winter's first snowflakes, his mortal body was buried according to Buddhist rites.

Mrs. Meyrink also gives a very vivid account of Gustav Meyrink's transformation from a worldly materialist to a spiritual mystic. Meyrink was a banker before his writing talent was discovered by the poet Ludwig Thoma. He operated a bank of his own in Prague. However, since his commercial ability was not very great, his business soon failed. This failure and a disagreeable physical impediment ripened in him the resolve to leave this life voluntarily. Meyrink was on the verge of putting his plan into execution, when a dramatic incident occurred. Already on the table before him, was the farewell letter he had just finished writing to his mother; beside it was a loaded revolver. Just as he was about to lift the

gun, he heard a noise behind his back. Startled, he turned around and noticed that a periodical had dropped through the slit in the door, provided for letters. He then glanced at the title standing out in large black letters: *The Life after Death*. Mechanically he reached for the booklet and began to read. Hours later he arose, an inwardly changed man.

What he had read, had made such an impression that he could hardly wait for the continuation of the article, in an issue two weeks later. All thoughts of suicide had disappeared. Gustav Meyrink had passed through a spiritual rebirth. From that moment on, he experienced the truth of: "When the Chela calls, the Guru appears." His development as a mystic rose, strange to say, in a steeply ascending curve and culminated in his literary works.

Meyrink's novels are written in masterful language and belong to the most fascinating works of the world's literature. Even though only a small part of the many hundred thousands of his readers can grasp the deep symbolism contained in his books, they are nevertheless a signpost to those who are on the threshold of spiritual awakening. They deftly suggest to their readers the eternal truths of the Cosmic, giving them an impetus to delve into the hidden and suppressed powers of their souls.

Imperative family duties make it necessary for me at this time to leave San Jose and go to Venezuela. This implies that I will be away from the Latin-American Division of AMORC for some time. And I want to express now my deep appreciation to our beloved Imperator, Supreme Secretary, and all of the other officers and personnel for their magnificent cooperation and interest, which has been the most valuable help in my most pleasant duties here for several years.

On the other hand, as a Member of the Supreme Council of AMORC, I will continue serving the Order and all members, to the best of my abilities, during my absence.

May I add here a word of cordial gratitude for all the kindness that in a social and personal way both Soror Calcaño and myself have received from everyone we know in San Jose and around Rosicrucian Park.

With Peace Profound to all,

J. A. Calcaño Calcaño
Member of the Board of Directors
Of the Supreme Grand Lodge of AMORC

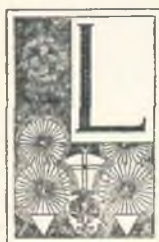
***The
Rosicrucian
Digest
December
1950***

FIRST TEMPLE DEGREE INITIATION

The Nefertiti Lodge of Chicago, at 2539 N. Kedzie Avenue in Logan Square, will give the First Degree Initiation to all eligible members of AMORC, on Sunday afternoon, January 7, at 3:00 p. m.

Searching The Unknown

By IOLA FORD PARKER, F. R. C.



LONG before man learned to record his acts and thoughts and dreams; long before he invented the alphabet or picture symbols or learned to impress stone and papyrus with his ideas, he must have had an inward longing to be near his Creator. He must even then have been seeking for some common ground where he could meet this Unknown Force to appease Him, petition Him, question Him.

Ancient records give many accounts of wise men retiring to remote sacred spots for communion with their God. The Christian Bible abounds with such stories: Moses, in the deserts of Midian; the Master Jesus, withdrawing to a mountain or to a garden, for the purpose of receiving personal inspiration.

The Greeks sought deep, mysterious caverns where, they believed, their gods remained hidden. When questions were called, the echoes coming back were not just rebounding sound waves, these believers declared, nor tricks of the wind, but the voice of the gods calling back the answers.

Sometime in the remote past, man began to build holy places—first only crude altars which he sanctified with offerings and prayers. The first temple may have been just a simple protection to keep an altar from the dust and the sun and the rain. As time passed, altars became housed in buildings, from simple tabernacles to elaborate cathedrals. With the building of the first temples, worship became confined more and more, until today, in our Western world at least, the temples and churches are considered to be the only ideal places for contacting God.

For centuries men have debated the question; conflicts and persecutions have arisen. Orthodox believers em-

phasize formal, public, group worship in buildings constructed for religious gatherings; a minority prefers private worship at home or out-of-doors. Even today, the first group is sincerely perturbed by those who believe they can come closer to God out-of-doors than in a building dedicated and kept sacred for such purpose. In the time of the Master Jesus the Samaritans considered a certain mountain the holy place of worship; whereas, the Jews considered the temple at Jerusalem the proper place. When asked, the Master Jesus answered, "the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father . . . the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth."

This is the opinion of those who refuse the dictation of custom and common practice. To worship in spirit and in truth is equally possible in public or private. Some may need temples in which to find God, and others, learning about Him there, may go out to meet Him everywhere—on the hills, in the forests, or in their own back yards.

As the mystic unfolds, he comes to understand that the presence and power of God within him is the same as in every vibrating atom of the universe. Holy spots are not holy because the Divine Essence is more concentrated there, but because angles of light, auras of living things, or minerals, set up harmonious crosscurrents which cause him to vibrate synchronously with the Cosmic itself.

The mystic finds God in the temple because he takes Him there in his heart. The places to worship an infinite God cannot be limited! The God of our Heart is the God of all creation and His presence cannot be concentrated within the walls of a building. We should ever go where He speaks most clearly. Each should learn the whereabouts of his own temple.



The Reader's Notebook

By

JOEL DISHER, F.R.C.

Literary Research

Department



Opinions expressed are the writer's own. In no way are they to be understood as AMORC's endorsement or recommendation of books quoted or mentioned; nor do they constitute an official judgment.



READING is often many things: pleasant escape, instructive pastime, real labor. It is scarcely ever just one of these alone and may sometimes be all three. In addition, it can be a bit harassing at times if one's interest is too all-inclusive. There is nothing, however, quite like savoring a book's many moods, living its excitements, following its ideas in creative fantasy. This last is decidedly a trap into which it is often pleasant to fall.

Today's novels seem especially conducive to that sort of thing—the novels of Charles Williams, especially. As a novelist, Charles Williams specializes in a kind of double dealing. Known in the United States only since 1948, Mr. Williams has had enthusiastic English readers for almost fifteen years. A modest man, meeting easily his fellow men whatever their opinions, he seemed unusual only in the fact that the natural and supernatural were equally real and acceptable to him. T. S. Eliot, the poet, who was his friend, once wrote: "Williams seemed equally at ease among every sort and condition of men, naturally and unconsciously, without envy or contempt, without subservience or condescension. I have always believed that he would have been equally at ease in every kind of supernatural company; that he would never have been surprised or disconcerted by the

intrusion of any visitor from another world, whether kindly or malevolent; and that he would have shown exactly the same natural ease and courtesy, with an exact awareness of how one should behave, to an angel, a demon, a human ghost, or an elemental."

Whether Mr. Williams would have called himself a mystic may be doubted; yet it is certain that he concerned himself with that mystic vision of love which moves men forward. Certain, too, that his books grew out of his own spiritual questing and integrity; to quote Mr. Eliot again: "The deeper things are there just because they belonged to the world he lived in, and he could not have kept them out."

Mr. Williams' novels begin on seemingly innocent and ordinary levels of objectivity, and then, before one knows it, slide off onto oblique inner levels where the reader suddenly finds himself in the bright blue yonder. It is like beginning on solid pavement and in familiar surroundings only to be in no time aware of walking on nothing at all or as a fly straight up a perpendicular wall of utter unfamiliarity. The adjustment is somehow made, however, and the reader continues in a dream world where topsy-turvy things can be accepted without blinking. "Reading," quoth Bacon, "maketh a full man."

The Greater Trumps (Pellegrini & Cudahy, New York. 1950. \$3), which the dust jacket describes as "the story

*The
Rosicrucian
Digest
December
1950*

of two young lovers who sought to find through magic cards powers which belong to God alone," very well illustrates this.

A man inherits by the will of a deceased friend a pack of playing cards. But these are a particular kind of cards—the Tarots, whose origin, history, and meaning have intrigued and baffled men for centuries. Are they just the quaint ancestors of our ordinary playing cards, or are they the long-lost leaves of the Egyptian Thoth's Magic Book? Were they designed for games, or were they meant to carry esoteric and magic secrets in an Ismaelitic fashion?

Mr. Williams wants to speculate as countless others before him have done; but he wants to do it in novel form. Suppose, he seems to say, we consider these painted pasteboards to have been more than pictorial notations, like the philosophical machines of the Middle Ages. Suppose not only universal secrets but magic powers lay in the cards themselves. Suppose, too, that the cards were only half the secret—the other half being actual puppets, fastened to a circular chessboard, which move by a force within themselves, making a microcosmic world.

Now the two—the cards and the puppets on their chessboard—are a powerful unity. The wise who first possessed the cards and knew their secret manipulated the natural forces of the universe through the cards and channeled those forces in any direction for good or ill. The Tarot cards are no longer painted pasteboards symbolic of universal forces; they are now like robots in which those forces actually inhere.

Somehow, this unified power becomes divided: the cards—the original ones—slip independently out in the world and leave the wise with only half their secret wisdom. They have the puppets which still whirl in their little world, but the meaning is gone out of them, and the power to control them as well. What would happen if the two could be brought together again?

One involuntarily shrinks from the thought of misguided man's willful or malicious tinkering with nature's machinery. He remembers the impersonality of the law's operation and foresees the inevitable disaster of playing god

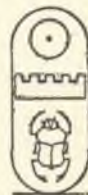
with mortal weakness and limitation. Perhaps he even recognizes himself to be the Fool of the Tarot Trumps, who rushes into the dance of life without hearing the music or knowing the rhythm.

Since the card in the Tarot pack called the Fool has ever been a puzzle, it may be that Mr. Williams intended some such illustration. The Fool is numbered zero. As in mathematics, zero has value only in juxtaposition with other numerals, so in the Tarot the Fool can gain experience only by being brought into contact with other counters in the dance. If experience is the purpose of life, even the Fool may catch something of the over-all harmony and learn a few measures as he jostles through life from partner to partner.

There is no doubt that the Fool is the key to Tarot symbolism as he is the nub of the mystery in Mr. Williams' novel. In the puppet world, the dance is perpetual, but the Fool apparently stands motionless and bemused in the center—that is, to all beholders except one. Sybil Coningsby saw him not as a stationary point nor yet as a clumsy participant in the dance, but rather as one who found his way easily among the dancers and kept perfect time to the measure.

It is just such subjective responses to situations made by both characters and readers of *The Greater Trumps* that make it such a rewarding if somewhat disturbing experience. It matches one's response to the Tarot cards themselves. One studies them, arranges them in various sequences, assigns them to the objective world, the psychic world, the phenomenal world, or relates them to the dot, the triangle, and the square and waits for the subjective self to render them meaningful and plain.

This is so, too, in life. As Maeterlinck wrote in *Wisdom and Destiny*: The water which flows from the pitcher of fate is colorless and without flavor—it is only when it reaches the lips that it becomes red like wine or tastes sweet or bitter. And Rosicrucian teachings again and again remind us that things have only that character we assign to them and are only as we realize them to be. As is the individual response, so is the event to that person.



There is much in any of Mr. Williams' novels that will escape the reader, and it is likely that the planes of consciousness will tilt differently for everyone; nonetheless, it is extremely good occasionally to have our mental equilibrium checked for its stableness. If air pilots need such tests before being

allowed freedom in the upper strata of the atmosphere, much more do students of mysticism need to be certain of their equipment before entering the vasty deeps of their own inner realms. *The Greater Trumps* offers an excellent opportunity for a trial flight, with positive assurance of a happy landing.



Famous December Birthdays

Composer

December 8, 1865. Tavastehus, Finland. Jean Sibelius. Neither a classical education nor a course of law could override a youthful preference and talent for music. Study abroad brought no foreign influence into his work and immaturity is absent from the beginning. Whether vocal, instrumental, or symphonic, all is unalterably Finnish, springing from deep northern roots and being individualized in his own experience.

Alchemist

December 17, 1493. Einsiedeln, Switzerland. Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim. God and nature were two ruling passions of his life: the one he worshipped, the other he explored. A third passion inevitably grew from the other two—man himself and the healing of his ills. "Paracelsus," as he called himself had one great fault as Browning wrote: "He lived too much advanced before his brother men."

Other December Birthdays

Ludwig van Beethoven
Tycho Brahe
Thomas Carlyle
Samuel Compton
Jean Henri Fabre
Henry IV of France
Johannes Kepler
Max Müller
Gilbert Stuart

Prophet

December 23, 1805. Sharon, Vermont. Joseph Smith, Jr. Seemingly fulfilling a prophecy of his mother that a prophet would come into her family, Joseph at fourteen saw visions. In 1830, Moroni, son of Mormon, directed his attention to Angelic tablets hidden at Cumorah Hill and with their translation the foundation of "the most remarkable religion of modern times," as it has been called, was laid.

Philanthropist

December 25, 1821. Oxford, Massachusetts. Clara Barton. A school teacher who later became a government clerk. She resigned her post and went into hospital work at the outbreak of the Civil War. Afterwards, she organized and financed a systematic search for missing soldiers. In 1881 she founded the American Red Cross. Relief work, therefore, was the pattern of her life. She was the author of several books.

*The
Rosicrucian
Digest
December
1950*

There can and should be a peacetime use for all the factories built for war production. None of them need be idle and there need be no idleness anywhere after the war. We have not enough industry to serve America's needs or the world's needs.

HENRY FORD

Ice Flowers

NATURE'S LESSON IN CRYSTALS

By WERNER DORING, D. Litt., Ph.D.

HE WHO has lived or lives where wintertime means severe frosts has some acquaintance with ice flowers — those transparent, crystallized forms of water, or vapor, which display themselves on windows when the air inside is damp and warmer than outside. In daily life, they receive different appreciation. Some people, especially children, feel joyful while looking at them and following their filigree patterns with eyes or fingers. On the other hand, they may be regarded as obstructions to vision by those who are riding in an automobile or in a train.

Few references to crystals appear in pre-Christian literature, the general reason being that civilization thrived in subtropical surroundings. In the epics of the early Middle Ages, mention of ice flowers is made only in a literary sense. They were observed and admired when seen on stones or wood, but the high point for these fine, cool embroideries came after glass had been invented and had come into general use as windowpanes. Although people then began to observe this phenomenon more closely, no records were published until recent times.

People, generally, have been satisfied with the statements in textbooks on physics and have regarded these crystals as only an interesting sport of nature. However, about fifty years ago, the Swedish dramatist and researcher,



August Strindberg, speculated about these peculiar ice forms, and was spurred on to systematic experiments because of their resemblance to plant leaves. He burned certain leaves to ashes, dissolved them, had the solution evaporated and afterwards frozen, or he used pure vinegar in a similar manner. As a result, he noted forms similar in shape to the leaves in question. In other words, the plants were resurrected in a particular style. A description of his tests and ideas was published by him but found little market.

In 1930, a German physician, working independently of August Strindberg, became interested in these ice crystals, observing that they changed their appearance in accordance with physical or chemical conditions around them. He found that higher degrees of heat seemed to cause particularly fantastic ice-blossoms and that the addition of small amounts of other elements to the air caused transformations. Continuing his experiments, he was astonished to find that the fragrance of roses and carnations affected the ice crystals, that the steam from cooking potatoes or beans made them change their original forms, and that even the odor of liquor and the smoke of cigarettes had a slight effect on them.

Inspired by these experiences and tests, Dr. Ehrenfried Pfeiffer went a step farther. From copper chloride



($\text{Cu}_2 \text{Cl}_2$), which shows a certain construction in crystallization, he found that even this regular chemical pattern assumed another form when saturated with an extract from flowers or tree leaves. Some of these forms showed a distinct resemblance to the originals in nature; whereas, others were not so clear. While experimenting with the sap of two different fir trees, he achieved two different crystallization patterns; this caused his medically trained mind to sense the reason.

Diseases and Color

Convinced that one of the two trees was knotty and crippled, he continued his experiments, not with trees and various flora, but with human blood. He moistened the copper chloride with a drop of that life-giving fluid, and the result was well worth the many hours spent, for he found that certain diseases of the human body print their stamp on the crystals of the blood. He triumphantly brought forth the crystallogram of tuberculosis, which shows the outline of an indented cross, similar to the so-called Maltese Cross. With the development of this system and the co-operation of other physicians, the crystallic stamp of many illnesses has been ascertained. Some diagnosticians in various countries have already accepted this method, which is successful in ninety percent of the cases. Even cancer can be identified on the glass plate.

While engaged in general research work, scientists discovered a related phenomenon. They noticed that when a glass plate containing nickel oxide was exposed to ultraviolet rays, it would fluoresce with a dark black-red light. It was further discovered that blood samples showed different shades. In fact, all colors could be made visible, in the course of the experiments, from light yellow to deep violet. When placed in order, these colors resembled the spectrum, ranging from the lightest pastel shades through purple-red to olive green, and down to turquoise blue and dark mauve. By comparison it was learned that blood samples taken from persons having the same disease, when treated on a glass plate, or in an éprouvette as above described, had the same color. The fluorescent color of the blood of a healthy person lies between light

and dark green; blood of diseased persons is differently colored, and the more glaring colors predominate.

These facts are not, of course, sufficient to declare the findings of extraordinary value. Medical science has long since developed more precise methods for the detection of maladies, among them being percussion, chemical tests, X-rays, electro-encephalographs, various reactions, and microscopic examination. Do these furnish all the clues? The answer is in the negative, partly because the peak of their effectiveness has been reached and partly because physical laws hinder further extension. Although medical science has been able to see most disease-causing bacteria, there is not the same success when the originator is a virus. There is little certainty yet as to what causes measles, cancer, yellow fever, psittacosis, and others. While blood treated with ultraviolet rays does not lift the veil entirely, it does open the door for comparing and cataloging disease marks at least.

From another standpoint, these observations and discoveries seem to have a higher value. In fact, they may be regarded as manifestations of greater importance than our scientific and technical acquisitions of the past centuries. Is it not as if Nature has lifted the curtain to permit a glance into the eternal construction of the Cosmic?

My Absorbing Study

About two years before the last war I had, during my spare time, collected nearly six hundred photographs of water crystals on windowpanes and elsewhere. This was done in various countries of the Northern hemisphere and involved many hours of examination. It was not their medical possibilities that inspired me but the thought of piercing the mysteries of the Cosmic where it swung the little door open and invited me to enter.

My thoughts in the matter ran as follows: Wood, straw, and paper cannot crystallize through their own capabilities; other substances such as stones, for instance, do not possess the ability to return to a noncrystallic condition, but liquids do. There is one liquid which dominates this globe. In a kind of circular movement, it leaves us and

returns to us. It falls from the sky, wets our ground, fills our rivers, combines with our ocean waves and then finds its way up again as mist. We may meet again the same drop of it we have used just now. We may have drunk it once before in a former incarnation. It may be green or blue, as in the Tyrolean lakes; it may be cool and fresh, as in the springs of the Rocky Mountains; it may be hot or salty or marshy. It has formed part of the tiniest organism as well as the biggest equatorial thunderstorm. It may have assisted in building up the colossal ice masses of the Arctic and in the flooding of the Yangtsekiang. It may have helped to build your body and mine. Its life is one of rotation. We all know it. Chemistry has established the fact that it consists of two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen. Even a very young student knows its formula: H_2O . But from what does it draw its abilities, its power, for example, to re-create in a crystal the leaf of a vine or a birch, after it has left the leaf in the form of sap and has been frozen?

Unfortunately, my collection of photographs of water crystals is no longer in my possession. I had to leave it, with all my other belongings, when the peaceful little place where I lived was practically annihilated by bombs, shells, and grenades during the latter part of World War II. I am no longer in a position to show these beautiful ice ornaments, but my conclusions, that all the wonderful powers of water cannot be explained alone by the presence of hydrogen and oxygen, have not been shattered.

However, such speculations undoubtedly must quit the physical field and enter the spiritual. From that viewpoint, there seems to be no other explanation except the creative theory that water, while constantly rotating, absorbs special powers of molding and shaping which, under certain conditions, are freed and accept a suitable form, like that of an ice crystal. This theory may not seem so absurd when we consider the matter of air. Physically, air is composed mainly of oxygen and nitrogen, whose qualities we know. But does that explain radio? Can the known elements of air produce the marvels of radio? Hardly. We learn that air

allows certain waves to travel through it. Physically, the appearance and properties of air and water are no longer problems but, from the metaphysical outlook, these elements still are mysteries.

Sensitivity of Primitive People

Travellers have reported—and I have witnessed the fact myself—that certain African Negro tribes are more afraid of cameras than of guns. The reason for this fear is the opinion that their picture in the hands of another is a lasting threat; that whatever harm is inflicted on the photograph will reach their body or soul. As one old tribe sorcerer explained: "Many tiny arrows whistle between the picture and the original." Since the crystallization of water seems to disclose the wonderful properties which lie in that liquid, is there not reason to believe, as do the Negro tribes, that there is a similar faculty in the air? The very fact that vapor passes through the air before it becomes an ice flower is proof. Since exact science has now accepted the cosmic ray as a reality, there can be little doubt that every material sends out a kind of radiation.

This helps us to a better understanding of many heretofore inexplicable matters. One may even conclude that serious illnesses so disturb one's personal oscillations as to create an inharmonious expression in the color—and probably also in the sound—of the blood stream and so disturb the cosmic order. From this point of view, absent healing, the use of the pendulum, and similar phenomena, should not be regarded as impossible of results.

Such perceptions may explain the eternal desire of humanity to remain in harmony with the vibrations of the Cosmic—the goal of all true religion. They prove that all materials, even so-called inorganic ones, "live." Each stone has its own peculiar pattern of crystals as is indicated when it is brought into contact with certain liquids—preferably acids—and snowflakes, in the beauty of their construction, speak a language still not understood by us. Some facts seem to show that such knowledge was possessed by mankind aeons ago. That it was lost—perhaps after some great global change



in the ratio of land and water—through the wrong conception that materialism creates greater happiness, may be the basis for the legend of the sinning of “the first men” not so many thousands of years ago.

Mysticism and Survival

Hindu and Greek philosophers remember, subconsciously, such higher human knowledge. This is indicated by their doctrine of “rhythmic and lasting vibrations as soul of the All,” for it cannot be understood otherwise. The response which their words have found among peoples has been small. Likewise, the so-called alchemists of the Middle Ages in Europe earned nothing but derision, although their doctrine, resulting from reminiscences, that all earthly materials are but sources of rays, is now being slowly recognized by science. Explorers and missionaries, especially medically trained men, have found, during the last fifty years, that the so-called superstitions of various tribes have, in many cases, an astonishing background of genuine and unexpected wisdom.

For a long time it seemed that physics and metaphysics or, to put it differently, that exact science and mysticism would always be hostile to each other. However, the deeper science delves, the more it goes from the “natural” to the “supernatural,” and the more it becomes the ally of the spiritual search-

ers. World-renowned scientists speak of reality in terms of a “chemical symphony,” and declare that “the laws of music rather than material principles ought to govern, and that in this pattern of universal music there exists the coherent reality of life and spirit, indescribable in lesser terms of material thought.” How beautiful the words of a famous atom specialist when he said, not long ago: “What we have learned about the atom has taught us to understand the universe and ourselves and lends support to our great heritage of religious truth. We begin to understand the mysterious life force which preserves the coherence and integral quality of the vastly complex human body, and we sense in the unity and coherence of the universe the vision of its infinite creator!”

Since the so-called supernatural lies beyond the comprehension of most men, it is often a fertile field for imposters and swindlers. Genuine mysticism, however, has nothing to do with deception; rather, it is an attempt to understand the mathematics of the Cosmic in order to bring about the ultimate happiness of mankind. Among other things, the small and fragile ice flower on the windowpane, often melted in vexation by a quick warm breath, holds one of the greatest secrets for man to unravel. It will give it up, gradually, as we approach the problem openly and sincerely.



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*The
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What OCCURS AFTER DEATH?

A dramatic landscape with a bright sunburst in the sky and a lone figure on a rock in the foreground. The sunburst is a large, bright, circular light source with numerous rays emanating from it, filling the upper half of the image. Below the sunburst, there are dark, silhouetted mountains and a body of water. In the foreground, a large, dark rock formation juts out of the water, and a small, white figure is standing on top of it, looking out towards the horizon. The overall scene is atmospheric and evocative, suggesting a sense of mystery and the unknown.

CAN MAN ever know what lies beyond the border of this world? Must the human being always look upon eternity as the great unknown, a vast precipice, toward which he is being drawn by the incessant swing of the pendulum of time? Is there a way to be assured that the prophecies of a sublime after-life are true, and not the honeyed words of a sooth-sayer? Have there ever, in the course of human experience, been any who have truly experienced a glimpse behind the veil? You, like thousands of other men and women, have pondered over this stupendous question. You, too, have wondered — is there an answer?

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